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*UNH Media Relations*

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## Media Relations

### Catholic Scholar Available To Discuss Vatican's New Rules On Child Sex Abuse

July 15, 2010

DURHAM, N.H. – Michele Dillon, a scholar of Catholicism and professor of sociology at the University of New Hampshire, is available to discuss the significance of new rules proposed by the Vatican aimed at preventing the sexual abuse of children.

According to Dillon, the new rules are a significant step but the question remains as to whether the Vatican and church bureaucracy will enforce the rules it makes.

"In the past, rules existed but were ignored, whether intentionally or not. It's also mind-boggling, in the context of sex abuse, to see a statement explicitly condemning the threat of women's ordination in the church," Dillon says.

"Regardless of the rule changes, it is clear that any consideration of trying to temper the male hierarchical culture in the church under which persistent, systematic patterns of sex abuse and institutional cover-up have occurred, is not currently part of Vatican reassessment, despite the deep and widespread loss of moral credibility the church is experiencing," she says.

Dillon has written extensively on Catholicism in the United States and elsewhere, and has been especially interested in the institutional and cultural processes that enable Catholics who selectively disagree with aspects of Catholic teaching to remain loyal to Catholicism. She also has examined the political engagement of the Catholic church, and of other churches and activist organizations in public moral debates in different western countries. She is the author of "Catholic Identity: Balancing Reason, Faith, and Power."

#### PHOTO

Michele Dillon, a scholar of Catholicism and professor of sociology at the University of New Hampshire. <http://www.unh.edu/news/img/liberalarts/micheledillon.jpg>.

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